1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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underlies this most fundamental lateral relationship. Given the correlated basic complex of the junior levirate, by which the next eldest brother inherits a dead man's wife, it would be impossible not to have polygyny; and it is rather difficult to see how the entire system of kinship could exist without the levirate in some form.

A man always tries to obtain his actual mother's brother's daughter; if he cannot get her, he tries to marry someone as near to her in consanguinity as possible.

Usually an older male dué and male galle have an understanding that their sons and daughters shall marry. Such a betrothal could occur before the birth of either child. Sometimes a gawel will promise his wife's next daughter to his waku. Thus, even before birth there is a recognized relationship between dué and galle.

There are several degrees of marriage. As soon as a boy is circumcised and old enough to understand and remember what is told him, his galle is pointed out. At a similar age a galle mielk has her dué diramo shown to her. This is done by the male parents of both children.

The young men and women older than the two usually tease the young couple with somewhat obscene jokes about their relationship and its meaning in their physical behavior. The youngsters are usually shy and ashamed when confronted with such humor; however, as small children, when away from the elders, they play house together. They are fully aware of the sexual act and of sex differences.

About the time facial hair appears upon a boy and the breasts of a girl swell, that is, when sexual intercourse is in their power and of interest to both, they start making love trysts in the bush. They may not copulate at first, but they simulate the act in close contact.

When a girl has her first menses the mother and older women put her inside a house (no special one) and leave her. She is supposed to remain in one place and move with digging sticks as crutches. This represents the myth of the two old women who made the present world, walking with the aid of digging sticks; the older of the two was menstruating. It is believed that menstruation is due to the sexual act, and that the blood is not dangerous to a woman since it comes from the abdomen and not the heart.

When a girl's first menses are over, her father (gawel to her dué) says to her mother (mokul to her dué), "You go make a house for them and fix a camp for them. She is big enough now" (see page 129).

After this, a young couple start living together and are recognized

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831 The woman's attitude will be illustrated under the head of runaway unions.

If a man had a sweetheart in his early youth and the affair terminated after he had acquired his proper mates, he must always feed her if she comes to his camp, and she must always feed him if he goes to hers. Wives, however, always complain and cause trouble for the man who tries to follow this custom because of their jealous fear that he may return to the affair. They are anything but hospitable to a husband's former sweetheart who visits their camps. An understanding husband will allow hospitality, particularly if he and his wife's former lover are good friends and if there has been no early trouble between the two. Otherwise, the husband, too, would forbid a wife to feed her former paramour.

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Lovers' unions often develop into permanent ones. If there is a dispute about a girl between two young men, one of whom has been living with her, it is likely that, all else being equal, the lover would get the girl, for, say the old men, "They were sweethearts." If the woman should be given to the other man, the lovers frequently run away, and the tribe later recognizes the union.

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837 A number of customs are connected with sweethearting. At night the husbands generally make their wives sit in their own camps. A favorite time for the assignation of lovers, therefore, is during the day when the women are accessible out in the bush and mangrove jungle, where they gather bulbs and shellfish—in groups for companionship and for fear of being stolen. The young man sneaks up near her and taps a stone on the ground. The woman is on the alert and knows what this means. She tells her companions that she is thirsty, or with some other excuse slips away to join her lover.

Sometimes a man has a woman's friend—always a woman—drop a certain type of string in the loved one's basket. If the woman belongs to the Yiritja moiety and the man to the Dua he puts an opossum fur string into it; if he is Yiritja and she Dua, he uses a red parrot feather string. This, of course, occurs only after he feels fairly confident that his advances will have a favorable reception. She replies through her woman friend, and arrangements are made for a time and place.

578 837 The following is an account of the operation of this custom, its failure, the feelings of the relatives involved, and the general camp scene during trouble over adultery. Such camp brawls are not infre-

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586 union is illustrated by the action of two former lovers when the man, to obtain tribal recognition of his taking the woman to wife, walks into the husband's camp and takes her away. The husband always shows fight, but his people on this occasion stop him. There is a considerable interval before the next step, the new couple meanwhile going away to another country. When the three meet again the former husband comes over to their camp, eats with them, and accepts presents of food or the man's totemic emblem, signifying that they are friends, that he recognizes the rights of the new dué and has given up his own. This very seldom happens, for a man's importance in society rests largely on the large number of galle who bear him many children and gather quantities of food during the great tribal ceremonies. It would only occur when he and the old men of his clan had become bored with the actions of the woman and did not wish to kill her.

583 Although many customs, such as the use of a string to bring back or take a runaway woman, apply also to the stealing of women, the 578 latter method of acquiring a woman nevertheless occupies a rather different place in the tribal life and local organization. If a woman is found to be really to blame, there frequently is no further trouble; but if it is believed she has been definitely stolen, difficulties are to be expected. The theft of a man's galle by a member of a rival clan is a recognized method of insulting all the members of the legal husband's clan. The clan into which she is taken consider it wrong but justifiable and it pleases them that their enemies have lost the woman.

Still another method of securing women—by ambush—differs from woman-stealing only in that the husband is first killed; capture is not the object of the fight except as retaliation for an earlier theft of women. The writer has recorded instances of a group of clans acquiring five or six women by this means.

582 The gift of a daughter to a far-off dué has two forms, according to 584 the recognition given it by the tribe. If a gawel has no near waku, he is forced to find a man considerably removed from him in this relationship, and all the people feel that he has done right; but if a gawel has a near waku and gives his daughter to a distant one, the near waku's people feel that they have been treated unfairly. If they are a strong clan they force her return. In any case, there is a feeling of uncertainty about the marriage, and her husband is apprehensive of her being taken away by her near dué. Sometimes a man gains permission from his waku to give his daughter to a distant one, because of a complex of circumstances, such as: (1) the weakness of the near

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waku and his clan; (2) the strength of the far-off waku's clan; (3) the near waku's having a number of wives and no younger brothers; and (4) the possibility that the waku may want to go without wives. There are two cases of this last on record. The old men usually try to get a man to marry and marry properly. Not only is their personal pressure felt by a man who does not wish to marry, but the whole impact of society is placed against him in hundreds of direct and indirect ways. It would be a strong man with an intense dislike of women who could retain his bachelorhood against such odds.[12]

The reader may assume from this account of illegal unions that marriage is a very unstable institution. Such is not the case. Although love affairs are common, a lifelong marriage either of a galle mielk to one dué, or to him and his younger brothers through the levirate, is the normal thing. Murngin society could not exist were this not true.

From the cases of unfaithfulness and the mechanical manner of acquiring spouses through the relationship of the parents, conjugal love might appear impossible. Although rare, it does exist. The ideal wife and husband are those who remain faithful to their spouses; on the other hand, a promiscuous woman or man is disapproved of even though not openly condemned.

To illustrate a man's affection for his wife: Mun-yir-yir had had a magically powerful totemic string given him to keep preparatory to its being placed upon another's totemic emblem. No woman may see or even hear of such a thing. His galle was burning bush for bandicoots. The fire burned and destroyed the string. All his clansmen and those of the man to whom the string belonged were extremely angry. Women had been killed before for such an offense. An old man said

[12] Occasionally one hears accounts of a number of unmarried men collecting in a group of five or six, going out into the jungle with one woman and having group sexual relation with her. One woman I knew of had done this several times; the people severely disapproved of her. She seemed a woman of insatiable sexual appetite and was continually in trouble because of it. She also seemed to stimulate all the men sexually and had a greater interest for them than some of the other women who might have been obtained. Sometimes a youth who is having an affair with an older woman will tell his friends and have them accompany him to his assignation. The other men remain back when they arrive. According to one of the accounts given me, the woman says, "Who is with you?" He replies, "My friends." She says, "Do not bring your friends, I only like you, I only want to have you." The boy says, "No, they are my friends. I'll have you first, then they can." She objects, and he says, "But I feel very sorry for them. Maybe if you don't play with them they will come use black magic on you." He keeps on talking like that and the woman listens and agrees to his proposal. There seems to be considerable evidence that what is called nymphomania among modern women also exists among these aboriginal peoples.

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604 personality of the waku to his gawel. The gifts are always more numer-
43 ous from the younger man to the older; but when a gawel receives
ranga string, a ranga, or the hair belt, he must reciprocate by giving a
return present to show his appreciation, or he would offend his waku.

604 When a gawel gives his daughter to his sister's son, this is not
582 merely a gift, for the waku by tribal law has a right to her and would
fight for her if the gawel tried to give her to someone else. He would
also feel that he had the right to gawel's wife's second daughter and
[587] the privilege of declining the offer of a third. There would be an
obligation, too, on gawel to give his waku another wife if the first
were barren or died before giving birth to a child. If a waku's wife
runs away from him, his gawel would under almost all circumstances
do everything possible to get her back for the husband. If he did not,
he would feel obligated to give the waku another daughter in her
place.

A gawel decides when the waku shall receive his daughter, or, in other words, he really determines when the tribe shall give its complete recognition to the marriage.

A group of brothers who were gawel would be divided up according to seniority among a group of waku who were brothers. The oldest gawel would have the oldest waku, and the next oldest gawel would have the next oldest waku. This is the ideal, naturally not always realized. Ideally, also, the first wife gives her first two daughters to the oldest waku and the next daughter to the next oldest waku.

[591] When a gawel decides to give recognition to a marriage of his daughter to a waku, he instructs his wife (mokul rumeru to the waku) to build a camp for the two, and for a time residence is matrilocal (see page ??).

604 When it is decided that a waku is to get a gawel's daughter, the
584 gawel shows his pleasure by giving presents to his dué, who is the boy's
father, and also to yeppa, his sister, who is the boy's mother. The boy's
43 mother would receive more than the father. A gawel is pleased, because
a waku is like a second son to him, and he has strengthened his posi-
581 tion in the tribe by this marriage tie to another clan, whereas a daughter
is of little use in time of war. A waku would be of great help, both
because of himself and his brothers, and also because of waku's other
relatives.

604 Such a relationship would also prevent trouble. "If my bapa and
my gawel tried to fight, I'd stop them," is a favorite remark among
the Murngin men. "I wouldn't know which one to help. I'd stop both

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of them." This demonstrates clearly the strong bond between these relatives. Sometimes a waku's gawel is not galle to the waku's father except distantly. Obviously, given the above feelings, the gawel-waku relationship adds much to the strength of a clan and at the same time helps prevent trouble between the two groups. 604

If a fight developed, gawel would help waku with the loan of his spears, and, if necessary, by fighting for him. His own sons would also aid his waku, their dué. A waku is taught much of what he knows about fighting and hunting by gawel. If the older man is a magician he also teaches this art to his waku. [868]

Gawel uses waku's property, or vice versa, with the freedom of a brother or father. If gawel's wife is misbehaving, waku tries by indirect threats of death to make her conform to the tribal ideal of conduct. [624]

Sometimes a gawel promises a waku his daughter, the boy makes presents to him for a long period of time, and the gawel then refuses to give him the girl. This means trouble. Strong pressure would usually be put upon the older man to force him to give her to the boy. This might end in an interclan fight, or the waku would probably run away with her. 604 578

Another disappointing situation for waku that occasionally occurs is when a gawel says, "I'll give you the daughters from this wife." The waku makes presents over a period of time, meanwhile watching the woman to see if she is going to bear children. If she is barren or produces only sons he stops making his father-in-law presents and turns his attention to some other gawel. 604 584 431

The Australian aborigine is a most industrious trader. Articles of trade are passed over well-known trade routes for hundreds of miles and through many tribes. The Murngin and their neighbors are no exceptions to this rule. The Ritarngo and the Djinba trade stone spear heads to the seacoast tribes for red ocher and pipe clay, or for wooden spears. Ranga string is exchanged between them, as well as many other articles. The waku-gawel reciprocal is utilized for the trading. All men try to have as many distant waku as they can. Presents are constantly being exchanged between the two, not to acquire material wealth so much as to extend a man's sphere of influence beyond the nearby clans. It pleases a Murngin to have a present sent from a distant people and adds greatly to his social prestige. It also gives him a greater feeling of safety when traveling, to know that he has a waku or gawel with whom he has this trading relationship. Waku and gawel often visit each other and their behavior demonstrates real friendship when they meet. 439 438 604 431 554 574

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593 examine the Murngin kinship behavior centered around sisters and daughters.

[594] Fathers and brothers treat a daughter and sister alike in that (1) they decide to which of her dués she will belong; (2) they stand responsible for her loss by runaway marriage, et cetera; (3) they beat her for misconduct; (4) they supply another daughter and sister to her dué if she dies or is sterile; and (5) they come to her assistance if she is excessively mistreated by dué.

The above largely summarizes a father's behavior toward a daughter, but gives only a part of a brother's relationship with his sister.

Except for the fifth case, the father and brother, so far as they obey tribal law, do all they can to force the daughter and sister into a permanent marriage and to censor the dué-galle relationship. The necessity of keeping a woman with her husband to protect the kinship structure of Murngin society is thus clearly felt by all people, including the members of her own family and clan, whose structures have been damaged by her going to a new family and clan.

593 628 614 The fifth element of behavior indicates a possibility of strife. No brother or father would interfere with a husband chastising his wife; indeed, they would help him. But if the wife were being brutally treated, or were killed for no just cause, they would interfere, which would usually mean a fight. Such an assumption of responsibility for the sister's and daughter's rights shows that she is still considered a part of her kinsmen's clan and family. It is only under the most extreme provocation that members of a woman's clan would act; no instance was recorded by the author. In case of a husband's brutality, his own clansmen apply pressure to prevent trouble with her clan, and also because of a feeling that such conduct is wrong.

593 614 682 If a brother killed his sister, no direct action would be taken by the clan, clan solidarity preventing it. This contrasts with the feeling of her own clan if her husband should kill her. It demonstrates that fundamentally she is considered as belonging to her own group, not to her husband's, even after she has been taken by the latter's clan.

593 Yet a brother calls his sister "wakinu," i.e., without relatives; and if her husband or anyone else swears at her in her brother's presence the latter throws spears at her and at all his other sisters, even though they are not involved in the quarrel. This behavior seemingly contradicts the above statement. There are several possible explanations. It might be said that he throws spears at her because he believes the swearing to be due to some fault of hers. A brief investigation proves

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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Marriage and Relationship

578 In the social life of the people polygamy is generally
595 practised, some men having as many as eight wives. While a good deal may be said in justification of this practice among a nomadic people, such as these aborigines are, it is a very fruitful cause of trouble and strife. This is occasioned by the jealousy which older wives frequently feel toward their younger tribal
[589] sisters, and also by the fact that, because of this system, many young men of marriageable age are unable to obtain partners. This latter fact, not unnaturally, leads to the stealing of women and general breaches of the moral laws of the tribe.

562 One, to us, highly unjust custom is to punish a woman who
627 has been stolen, even though she has been taken away by force,
672 much more severely than the man who has stolen her. In most
684 cases she is, when recovered, badly speared or beaten, in some cases so severely treated as to be killed, while the man who has taken her, unless he occupy a prohibited relationship to the woman, is usually let off with a severe lecturing.

627 Generally all the relatives of the wronged husband who are
684 present will join in this brutal chastisement of the woman, their action being justified by the fact that they "feel sorry" for their fellow-tribesman. Perhaps experience has proved the value of this method of controlling domestic relationships.

582 Marriage, as previously indicated, is regulated by the social
584 organisation of the tribe. There are only certain men of the opposite moiety who are eligible to become the husband of any particular girl or woman. To one of these men the girl is given in infancy, and, though this man has nothing directly to do with her until she reaches the age of puberty, he is required, during the years of her infancy and girlhood, to fulfil certain obligations, such as the making of presents of food, weapons or utensils, to her father.

[585] Because of this custom, there is nothing approaching a ceremony of marriage among these people, the girl during infancy as really belonging to the man as she will later on when he actually
587 takes her to wife. When a man dies, his wife or wives immediately
768 pass over to one or more of his tribal brothers, so that, excepting in the case of a few very old women, there are no widows, and there are no orphans in this aboriginal community.

182 431 461 554 626 least equal, or if possible greater value, in order to maintain his social status and to enhance his prestige. He achieves this by his capacity to reciprocate a gift quickly and generously. If he failed to meet the obligations imposed, for example by the kinship pattern, he would lose face, prestige, in his group. It will be evident that this feeling of shame and humiliation at failure to reciprocate a gift or to honour an obligation, apart altogether from any danger of incurring resentment and visitation by evil magic, furnishes one of the most powerful mechanisms which underlie the production of food and goods, and the circulation of these. This is well shown by an example given to me by my informants, which illustrates the use which can be made of this fact 262 562 784 to gain a desired objective. While a boy is still regarded as a child, there is no tabu even for his sisters upon eating the food that he may capture. But immediately after the circumcision ceremony, when his social status is altered and he lives apart from his mother and father in the single men's camp, the food collected or killed by a boy becomes tabu to relations of certain orders, and is now known by a special name, *kälŋboi* (*vide* page 21).

262 431 784 606 584 The eating of all *kälŋboi* food is surrounded by tabus, even for those relatives who are permitted to partake of it at all. For "outside" or "distant" relatives under the kinship system to eat this *kälŋboi* food is a special privilege, but the obligation to make ceremonial return payments, again of the type called *tadoit*, is always present. *Kälŋboi* food may sometimes be used to ingratiate a young man with a woman who stands in the relationship of potential mother-in-law (*mukul rumaro*) to him, but whose daughter has already been promised (*wawun*) to another man some distance away. At first the *mukul rumaro* may refuse the *kälŋboi* food, but under coercion she may at length accept it, and

if she does so, is regarded as having compromised herself into giving her daughter to the youth whose *kälŋboi* food she has eaten, although she knows that a fight must follow when the man to whom the girl rightfully belongs learns what has happened. Having accepted the *kälŋboi* food the woman also makes a ceremonial presentation of food which she gives to her *korroŋ* (son-in-law), who however does not eat it himself but distributes it to certain other relatives, defined by custom.

This example will show the strength of the urge to reciprocate, to discharge an obligation, and the extent to which it dominates the behaviour of these people, as well as its importance as a driving force in social and in economic activities, in which it furnishes one of the most important incentives to work.

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
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Wongar men, things would have been different. Both the men and the women were Dua. They were incestuous. It was like a brother and sister being together. Those two sisters left that country, one pregnant and the other menstruating. If they had not done this, this cycle would never have happened. Everyone and all plants and animals would have stayed single. But after the Wawilak sisters had done this they made it the law for everyone (pages 250-251).

When I was a small boy I walked about single. One day my gawel came to me and said, "Look at me. I am your gawel. You must give me kangaroo and turtle and spears. By and by I will give you my gatu mielk" (pages 93-98).

I gave him spears and spear-throwers, hair belts, and all kinds of food because he would give me his daughters. When I first started making presents to him for my wife, my younger brothers all helped me. By and by, when they get ready to have a wife, I shall help them make presents to their gawels. My gawel gave my father presents of spears and food, and he also gave my arndi presents because I was her son and because she is my gawel's sister.

We like our wives' fathers very much. Suppose my gawel and my father quarrel and suppose they fight. I can do nothing. I cannot help my father. I cannot help my father-in-law. I must do nothing. They are all the same to me. I must try to stop any fight.

All men try to get plenty of wakus in other countries. This is because they send presents to their gawels. They send things that aren't in this country. This country, where we are now, has no stone. Relatives here send presents to the Ritarngo country for stone spear heads. They send bamboo to the Goyder River people for it. Some others have no white clay and they send to other countries for it. Fathers-in-law and sons-in-law are the people who do this (pages 95-96).

Sometimes a no-good gawel promises his daughter to three wakus. All these "half" sons-in-law give presents to him. They all think they are going to get that girl. By and by one gets her. This means a big row. The other two want to fight this lucky one, and they always fight the father of the girl because he has been two-faced. They think this gawel maybe is a little bit crazy. Sometimes two or three boys, when they are all trying to get a girl, see that her father is no good and they all quit.

When a man marries a woman his father-in-law tells him to take good care of her. When a man has two daughters from his father-in-law, sometimes the old man comes and says to him, "It is better that I give your younger brother this next girl." The older brother says, "Yes, you tell him

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159 to feed her [give her to him]"; but if he is a greedy fellow he says, "No, I
584 want to keep her myself."

159 The black man's custom is different from the way white men are. A
[582] black man takes a wife when she is very young, sometimes before her
593 breasts have come. He sleeps with her, loves her, and does everything but
[826] have intercourse with her. This makes his girl want him and makes her
breasts come large and start sticking out. That is before her blood comes.
[841] When blood first comes to a woman it is after she has copulated with a man
for the first time. That is what causes it. She has blood a few more times,
and then she has a baby, and then the blood stops.

159 If my wife gave me no children, I would go to my gawel and tell him. He
587 would say, "Wait a little while and I will give you another daughter of mine
595 so that you can have children." If my wife died, my father-in-law would
give me another one right away. If he hasn't a grown daughter, he would
wait until his little one got larger and then he would give that girl to me.

159 When my second wife got large enough her father and mother brought
595 her to me and said for her to stay with me and that I was her husband
(pages 95-96). My first wife [the new wife's older sister] did not growl at
me but kept very quiet when I was around. When I was away she growled
at her little sister and told her to go on away. "Mahkarolla belongs to me
and not to you." By and by my new wife told me about this. She also told
her mother and father.

[626] They said to my first wife, "You must stop this quarreling with your
sister. She is just the same as you. You are our daughter and she is our
daughter. You have Mahkarolla for a husband, and we have given her to
him and she has him for a husband. She is your young sister. You will now
have someone to look out for the wood for you, and she can help you get
food for your husband."

My wife kept quiet then. Those two sisters live together just like good
friends. They never fight like the wives of some husbands do. They look
out for each other's children.

159 When another gawel liked me he went to my proper father-in-law and
584 said, "I like that son-in-law that belongs to you. I would like to give him
my daughter. He can be a son-in-law of mine, too." My gawel, because he
is a good man, said, "You haven't promised that girl of yours to somebody
else, have you?" If that man had said, "Yes," mine would have said, "No,
you can't because that will make trouble for my son-in-law." That man
said, "No," so my father-in-law said, "Yes."

159 My mother-in-law—I don't talk to her. I can't go close to her camp, can't
606 go pick up something close to her camp, can't take food from her. I can't
give food to her straight; I must give it through my wife. When I am